GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LAW , JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6522
ANSWERED ON:09.05.2002
MORE POWERS TO LOK ADALATS
DADICHILUKA VEERA GOURI SANKARA RAO;SAVSHIBHAI MAKWANA

Will the Minister of LAW , JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of Lok Adalats existing/to be set up in each State;

(b) the powers to be provided to them; and

(c) the extent to which it will reduce the cases pending with the various courts in the country ?

Answer

MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY)

(a) As per available information so far more than 1 lakh 24 thousand Lok Adalats have been organized in the country. As organizing Lok Adalats is a continuing process and the purposes of holding Lok Adalats are need based, no specific number of Lok Adalats to be set up can be indicated.

(b) At present, the Lok Adalats can settle disputes only on the basis of compromise or settlement among the parties. If the parties do not arrive at a settlement, the case is either returned to the court of law or the parties are advised to seek remedy in a court of law. To remove this drawback, it has been decided to add a new chapter in the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, which will facilitate setting up of permanent Lok Adalats for providing compulsory pre-litigative mechanism for conciliation and settlement of cases relating to public utility services such as transport (air, road, water), postal, telegraph or telephone, power, water, sanitation, hospitals and insurance. A Bill to this effect has already been introduced in the Lok Sabha. When passed by the Parliament, it will enable the National Legal Services Authority or the State Legal Services Authority, as the case may be, to establish permanent Lok Adalat at such places and in such numbers as may be expedient to enable the Lok Adalats to exercise its jurisdiction in respect of one or more public utility services as necessary from time to time. To avoid prolonged litigation it has also been proposed that the award made by the Lok Adalat shall be final, binding and shall not be questioned in any original suit, application or execution proceeding. The jurisdiction of the Lok Adalats would be limited to cases up to a monetary value of Rs. 10 lakhs. Under clause 22C of the Legal Services Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2002, Government has power to increase the limit of ten lakh rupees in consultation with National Legal Services Authority.

(c) It is not possible to quantify the reduction in the Court cases at present.